

## REMARKS

In the Office Action dated June 26, 2008, the Examiner rejected claims 17-25, 27-30 and 32-43 and 59-83. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider the rejection in light of the following discussion.

With respect to the rejection of claims 17-25, 27-30, 32-43 and 59-83 based on Stevens '273 in view of Miller 5,147,169, Robertson 6,230,471, or DeWitt 5,052,168, the Examiner's proposed rational for combining the references simply has no basis in the teaching or the real world application or what one of ordinary skill in the art would do. The reasoning that it would be obvious to incorporate certain features of the Stevens '273 automated system, omit certain subassemblies, which are picked and chosen according to a criteria that the Examiner has selected, and then add in certain select manual assemblies in order to save cost is simply made up. There is no way that one of skill would mix and match automated and manual procedures in the way that the Examiner has attempted to do so. Further still, such mixing and matching would create a system that would be much more expensive than a manual system, but only marginally faster. In short, there is simply no basis in the references for the mixing and matching proposed by the Examiner.

The Examiner's argument appears to be that since many of the features of Applicant's system were known in the art, the combination is obvious. But it is clearly established that a combination of known features can be patentable over the individual known systems. The Examiner seems to think that incorporating manual features into a processing system is a step back in the art. That simply is not true. In the present instance, it is the combination of features in a particular way to address a shortcoming in the known systems that has existed for quite some time. This combination as recited in the claims is quite different from the known systems, and is patentably distinct. Accordingly, Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider the recited combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by the references of record.

Further still, the combination of Stevens '273 in view of Robertson

6,230,471 is not a proper rejection because Robertson was filed on June 6, 1997 whereas the present application claims priority back to 1996. Therefore, Robertson '471 is not properly citable, so that the combination of Stevens and Robertson is not properly citable. The combination of Stevens '273 and Robertson '471 are the only pending rejections of claims 59-83 and the features of claim 81 have been incorporated into claim 17. Accordingly, for this additional reason, claims 17-24, 59-80 and 82-83 are allowable over the prior art of record.

In light of the foregoing, Applicant believes that this application is in form for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney if the Examiner believes that issues remain regarding the allowability of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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